

## **mullets are stupid anyway. by orangecoconut**

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**Genre:** Angst, Angst with a Happy Ending, Billy's dad is a piece of shit we know this, Child Abuse, Established Relationship, Homophobic Language, Hurt/Comfort, Joyce Byers is an angel, M/M, Non-Consensual Haircuts

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Billy Hargrove, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Neil Hargrove, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

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**Summary:**

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"Uh, I dunno—" because he doesn't, but he has an idea.

"Don't play stupid with me boy," Neil all but snarls, and Billy doesn't have to look behind him to know Susan has gone stiff and Max is worrying her bottom lip. "That hideous mark on your neck. What whore did you let put that on you?"

Now, here's the thing about Neil's use of whore when directed at his son:

It doesn't just imply girls. It did, once upon a time, but then Billy got caught with Daniel Harbinger in California and now whore can also mean faggot, so.



## **mullets are stupid anyway.**

### **Author's Note:**

- For [CrownedKingLewis](#).

heed warnings please xoxo

also, my sweet friend drew a companion piece to this fic that you should totally check out @  
[http://benalras.tumblr.com/post/172349531167/  
heres-some-art-for-this-amazing-drabble](http://benalras.tumblr.com/post/172349531167/heres-some-art-for-this-amazing-drabble)

It's Billy's fault.

Well, technically speaking, it's Steve's fault since he leaves the hickey on Billy's throat rather than his collarbone where *he can hide it* like he's supposed to. But it's also Billy's fault because he didn't stop him. He didn't stop him because they were both wasted and desperate and hadn't gotten their hands on each other in a *week* thanks to Steve's parents coming home. Hell, Billy didn't even remember it happening, far too focused on the feel of the brunette's body sliding with his; on skinny hips grinding into his own and the urgent sounds it brought out of the both of them.

They've been doing this *thing* with no name for almost four months. Dating without the term dating applied. For four months Steve has never left a mark above his collar. For four months they've played it safe and smart. So, when Billy stumbles home wasted after getting fucked the way he likes, he doesn't even consider his throat as he crawls into bed and passes out.

He doesn't think about it in the morning when he wakes up, either, and fate is a real bitch who is *not* on his side today. See, normally, when Billy wakes up hungover and feeling disgusting he takes a shower first, but this time his headache is so bad he decides to pop a couple Tylenol and guzzle down a mug of coffee in some vain attempt to feel human again.

He walks out of his bedroom in shorts and a white t-shirt. The family

is all awake, Max drinking orange juice and eating toast while reading some sort of comic book one of the losers lent her. Susan is washing dishes and Neil is pouring himself some coffee.

Max is the only one that looks up when he walks in, and if Billy had been someone else ( kind, friendly, *not fucking hungover* ) he would have given her some attention and maybe even a short *mornin'* when she looks up and says, "Billy—"

Again, maybe if he'd done that he would have figured out she wasn't greeting him at all, but she had instead seen the hickey. She'd seen the hickey was trying to warn him because she knew all about him and Harrington and what *exactly* Neil would do to him if he found out.

But Billy isn't a nice guy. He's not nice, but he *is* hungover, and he has no time for pleasantries so he just says, "Not right now, Maxine," because he really needs some coffee in his system before he can hold any sort of conversation.

Neil hasn't laid a finger on him in exactly nineteen days— Billy keeps count. Things have been alright. Billy's done what he's been told, he hasn't missed one *yes sir*, and he's taken Max everywhere she's needed to go without complaint. Last week he even offered to pick up groceries when Susan complained about her feet hurting from work. He was being *good*.

Ya' know, minus the part where he stopped at Harrington's house along the way to have him shove his cock down his throat so he could suck him dry.

Good 'ol Billy Hargrove the Queer, always fucking up his own life because he can't keep it in his pants for five fucking seconds.

His hair is tied back because he can't stand the feel of it on his shoulders or the back of his neck when he feels like this. He's pouring himself a mug, Neil leaning against the counter to his right. He can feel his father's eyes on him, tries not to think about it. *He's been good.*

"What's that?" His dad asks, and Billy freezes, mug halfway to his

lips. Behind him he hears Max close her comic book.

“What’s what?” Billy asks and, despite himself, looks up at his father. Neil’s eyes are narrowed, something brewing behind empty brown irises. Billy knows that look.

Nineteen days without incident is about to turn back to zero.

“That—” Neil says, the same time Max stands and goes, “Dad? Can you take me to the park today?” Using dad on purpose because Neil *fucking loves it* and Max is *smart* and trying to protect her idiot step-brother from another concussion.

This time, though, Neil ignores her and that’s when Billy knows he’s fucked.

“That,” he repeats, anger creeping into his voice. He reaches out, prods Billy’s neck with one, violent finger, and makes his son flinch back. Billy—eyes maybe a tad wide—covers his neck with his hand and goes.

“Uh, I dunno’—” because he *doesn’t* but he has an *idea*.

“Don’t play stupid with me boy,” Neil all but snarls, and Billy doesn’t have to look behind him to know Susan has gone stiff and Max is worrying her bottom lip. “That hideous mark on your neck. What *whore* did you let put that on you?”

Now, here’s the thing about Neil’s use of whore when directed at his son:

It doesn’t *just* imply girls. It did, once upon a time, but then Billy got caught with Daniel Harbinger in California and now whore can also mean *faggot*, so.

Billy, looking for a way out, opens his mouth to name some random girl at school, but before he can get the words out Neil continues, “You said you were hanging out with a *friend* last night, not that you had a date.” What that means is, *You also said you were hanging out with a friend when I caught you with a black boy’s dick halfway down your throat*.

“I... was. Girl friend, though.” He licks his lips, it’s a bad move, but Billy’s too fucking hungover to be on his A-Game. “Stuff happened.”

“*Stuff*,” Neil repeats, “And what’s *her* name?”

And that’s it. Billy knows what that means. That means, that once Billy gives *her name* his father is going to do everything in his power to find this girl, or her parents, and get the truth. He’ll do this fast enough that Billy has no chance of paying some chick off to lie. He’ll do this, catch Billy in his lie, and beat him with an inch of his life just like he did back in California.

“Billy,” his tone is chiding, *warning*. Neil hates repeating himself. “What’s their name?” *Their*. Fuck.

He swallows, licks his lips again, goes, “*Dad*.”

Somewhere off to the side, Max says Neil’s name. Neil goes, “Susan. Take Max to the park.” Susan opens her mouth and Neil insists, “*To the park*.” Reluctantly, Susan puts a hand on Max’s shoulder and tries to leave the room. Max only budges when Billy shoots her a look, pleading. *Just go*. They walk out of the kitchen, down the hall, and suddenly it’s just Billy and his father and the bruise on his neck burning a hole through his skin.

“Tell me his name, Billy.” Neil sighs. *His*. “And this’ll be easy.”

Yeah, *easy*.

It’s weird, you know. The first time Neil Hargrove found out his son liked cock, he beat the ever loving shit out of him. This time he hasn’t raised a fist once. Billy almost thinks that it’s maybe because there hasn’t been confirmation, but he knows better. His father has never needed *proof* to hit his son before.

Again, he doesn’t speak.

Neil licks at his bottom lip, slow and deliberate. It’s a threat. Then, “Okay,” and he walks out of the kitchen. Billy, of course, does not move even though the door is only thirty-two steps away. Thirty-two steps and he’d be free. He could run, never look back, hide out somewhere until he turns eighteen then *get the fuck out*.

Instead, he stands there. He stands there and waits until his father returns, and when he sees what Neil has in his hands his entire body *shakes*. Scissors. Scissors and his electric shaver.

*No.*

Billy's back is against the counter still, and he hates himself for not running those thirty-two steps when he had the chance. "Dad—" it's feeble, pleading. Neil looks on, unphased. Always unphased.

"Tell me his name and this doesn't have to happen," he states simply, and Billy knows he's telling the truth. If he tells him who he'll probably just get beaten, and Billy would take a god damn beating over *this* any day. Neil knows that. Neil is smart. Neil knows what Billy's hair means to him.

Neil, however, does not know that Steve Harrington means *more*.

Billy thinks about Daniel back in California. He thinks about his beautiful face and how it looked after his father got done with him. How his face was so swollen Billy could no longer see his pretty green eyes. How Billy knew the gash in his jaw would leave a jagged, white scar behind that'd mar his features for the rest of his life.

Billy thinks about Daniel and then he thinks about Steve. He doesn't have to imagine what Steve will look like if Neil got a hold of him. He already knows because of that night at the Byers; because of all the school days after where Steve walked into Hawkins High and Billy was forced to look at his handiwork.

He'd promised then to never make Steve Harrington, the prettiest boy he's ever seen, look like that again. Not under any circumstance. Not ever.

So, Billy meets his father's eyes and tightens his jaw. Neil sighs and says, "Very well, take a seat," and Billy does.

The sight of his curls falling to rest at his feet will haunt Billy for years.

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He spends the next three days hiding in his bed. Each day Max sneaks him food. Each day she tries to talk to him. Each day he tells her to just go away, and pulls the covers back over his head.

On the fourth day he wakes up to a Los Angeles Clippers cap sitting on his desk next to his breakfast. He knows that hat. It's Max's hat.

Billy wonders how he could have ever hated her.

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On the fifth day, his father shoulders open his door, rips his covers off his body, and tells him to *stop being a little bitch*, and to *go to school*. Billy thinks about arguing. He thinks about starting a fight and getting his ass kicked. Then he decides he already looks bad enough and doesn't need his face fucked up too.

He wears the cap and pulls his hoodie over his head for added protection.

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At school, Steve finds him like their bodies are magnetized together. His gaze moves over the hat, the hoodie, and then stops at Billy's eyes. He obviously wants to reach out, wants to cup his not-

boyfriend's face and kiss the frown from his lips. Instead he says, "I was so worried," and, "I wanted to come see you but..."

*But your dad* goes unspoken.

Billy shrugs and goes, "I'm good." It's a lie. He tastes it on his tongue and Steve hears it in his voice.

"Max told me." And of course she did, because she's a tattle tale. The hat on his head reminds Billy not to hold it against her this time. "I'm sure you still look good." Thing is, Billy knows he's being sincere. He's being sincere and he still doesn't believe him.

"He did a shit job," he says simply. "It's choppy. That's all." As if Billy's only problem with it is that it wasn't done by a professional. As if he'd somehow like it if it was.

Steve licks his lips and goes, "We'll go to a barber after school."

Billy snorts, "I can't afford that, Harrington," and Steve knows better than to argue; knows better than to say *I'll pay* because Billy refuses to let him pay for *anything*. Instead he frowns and creases appear between his brows like they do when he's thinking too hard. Billy wants to reach out and smooth them; his fingers twitch helplessly at his sides.

"Joyce then." Steve decides, "She cuts Jonathan and Will's hair."

"Will has a fucking bowl cut." There's a bit of disgust in his voice, a bit judgmental, and it's the most *Billy* he's been in days so it makes Steve smile.

"Believe it or not, Will chose that look." Billy looks even more offended now. He *liked* that kid, too. They needed to have a talk. "She'll do good, I promise. *And she's free.*"

Billy can't argue with free.

He's never felt more anxious and self-conscious than when he drives to the Byers'. Steve senses this and reaches out to hold his hand. Billy

squeezes his fingers in a silent *thanks*.

Joyce is soft and kind, as per usual. She puts a mirror in front of him and talks to Billy the entire time, asking what he wants and stopping when he stiffens up. Steve watches just from the side, leaning against a counter while sipping apple juice, his foot pressed up against Billy's.

"I think we should leave these curls on top," she says, fixing a couple. Billy watches them bounce into place and thinks of his mother. "Shave down the back and the sides a bit too, but don't get rid of the curls. They're too beautiful to get rid of."

Despite himself, Billy smiles a little.

When it's all said and done he looks better. Not great- not in his mind- but *better*. Joyce brushes lingering hair from his shoulders and back then prompts him to stand and Billy prims himself in front of the mirror in the bathroom for a while.

"How do I look?" He asks when he realizes Steve's standing in the doorway watching. The other boy smiles and takes a few steps inside. He reaches out to fix a couple curls and goes.

"Honestly? Better."

"*Better?*" He sounds indignant, *offended*. He kind of is.

Laughing, Steve leans in to press a kiss just under his ear. "Baby, I love you, but I fucking hate mullets." Steve, of course, doesn't realize what he's said until Billy doesn't respond and he meets his gaze in the mirror. Billy's frozen, eyes a bit wide, and that's when realization dawns across Steve's face. "I mean—"

Suddenly the front door slams, making them both jump, and feet are heard pounding through the house. From the kitchen Joyce calls, "Don't run!" but it's useless.

Exactly three seconds later Max is pushing herself into the bathroom, Will right behind her. She looks momentarily disappointed when she

sees Billy, but not because of the haircut. “When Jonathan picked me up he said Mrs. Byers was cutting your hair and I wanted to be here, but he drives like my grandma—”

Somewhere in the living room Jonathan yells out, “I heard that!” and Will smiles.

“It looks good.” He says, voice soft because his voice is *always* soft. “I like the curls.”

Max nods, “You don’t look as stupid anymore,” and again Billy is fucking offended, and Steve, because he’s a *traitor*, fucking *laughs*.

“As?”

“Yeah. You’ll *always* look stupid, but now it’s not *as* bad.”

Billy reaches for her and she ducks away from his grip, running out of the bathroom. Will lingers for a moment, his smile going gentle around the edges. Billy returns it, because he can never help it when it comes from that kid, and then Will slips back out to give Billy and Steve back their privacy.

Steve opens his mouth, “B—”

“I love you too.” He says quick, probably too quick. Because if he doesn’t Billy’s pretty sure he’ll bitch out and *never* say it. Because, as soon as Steve said it, Billy realized he did too, that the words felt right. Because the worst thing ever just happened to Billy and he actually felt kind of okay, all because Steve was at his side.

For a moment, he looks surprised, and then a slow, stupid-happy kind of smile crosses his face and Steve leans in to press a gentle kiss to Billy’s jaw. He turns, ducks his head, and captures Steve’s lips with his own. The bathroom door is open, anyone could see. Billy decides he doesn’t care.

Suddenly fingers thread through his hair, grip, and *pull*, causing Billy to gasp and Steve to laugh into his mouth, licking at his teeth. “Just making sure there’s still enough to pull when we’re in bed.”

Grinning wickedly, Billy switches them, pushes Steve up onto the

counter, and reaches behind himself to close the bathroom door. “Oh yeah? Were you worried?”

Steve matches his grin, spreads his legs so Billy can slide between them, and wraps his arms around his neck. “Absolutely. It’d be a deal breaker. I’d have to find someone else to—”

Billy laughs and shuts him up with a kiss.

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That night, when they’re naked and spent and wrapped up in Steve’s sheets, Billy lets himself cry. It’s silent and raw, and it’s not the first time he’s cried in front of Steve. And, like he always does, the brunette turns over, wraps his arms around his now-boyfriend, draws him close, and plays with his hair. Billy stuffs his face into his chest and listens to Steve’s heartbeat until the tears slow and he falls asleep.

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That next Monday, Billy forgoes the cap and the hoodie and walks into school with his head held high and his signature, self-satisfied grin plastered on his face. He receives compliments all day, but none of them compare to the smile Steve sends him from across the hall, or the long, slender fingers that card through his curls when they’re alone.

He decides the new haircut isn’t so bad. Maybe he even likes it.

Or, at the very least, he knows he can grow to.

**Author's Note:**

so this is really old lol. sorry guys, i just wanted to put it up on here. it'd be real sweet if you left kudos & comments anyway tho <3

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